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STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - RUSSIAN PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS

LEAD STORIES: Top stories on Tuesday morning include a
U.S.-Japan agreement reached ahead of the COP 13
climate change meeting in Bali, Indonesia, for each
nation to set "voluntary targets" for emission cuts.

¶1. "Premonitions of a 'Putin Dynasty'" The liberal
Asahi editorialized (11/4): "Each nation has its own
form of democracy. Although the recent Russian
parliamentary elections may have been conducted in a
'Russian way,' we have to wonder whether this was true
democracy at all.... During President Putin's term in
office, a balance of power has apparently been
maintained among various business and political
interests. The groups that support the Putin
administration may have decided that it is in their
common interest to maintain the current regime and the
influence of Putin at the cost of democracy. If they
ignore the presidential term limit and parliamentary
elections in their quest to seek a continuation of the
Putin regime, Russia will move one step closer to a
dynasty. No matter how 'Russian' this is, it is a long
way from democracy."

¶2. "Putin Establishes Post-Presidency Power Base" The
moderate Yomiuri editorialized (11/4): "The results of
Sunday's Russian parliamentary elections helped
President Putin establish a political base for his
continued power after the expiration of his term in May
2008.... Backed by the election results, Putin will
likely seek to revive Russia as a major power by
maintaining or intensifying his hard-line approach to
the U.S. and Europe.... Putin signed a law regarding
the suspension of the Treaty on Conventional Armed
Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) ahead of the elections.

His administration deemed this a measure in response to Washington's plans to deploy a missile defense shield in Eastern Europe. The CFE Treaty, which is aimed at reducing conventional arms in Europe, embodied the end of the Cold War. Putin's expression of his readiness to scrap the accord was aimed at winning the elections by impressing voters with his strong leadership.... Although he has declared that he has no intention to revise the Constitution in order to seek reelection next spring, Putin will likely put all his energies into creating a political base for himself that will remain after he steps down."

SCHIEFFER